



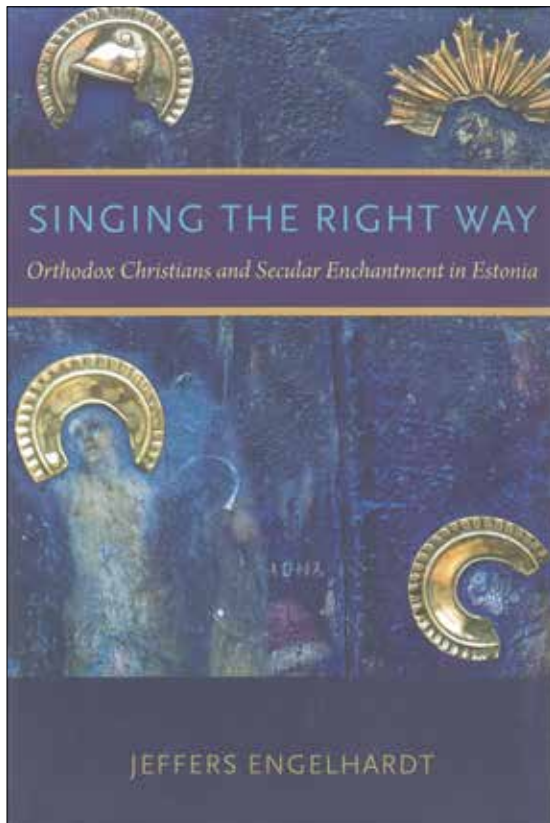
**JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
FOR ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC**

Ed. Ivan Moody & Maria Takala-Roszczenko  
Vol. 2, Section III: Reviews, pp. 105-106 ISSN 2342-1258  
<https://journal.fi/jisocm>

**SINGING THE RIGHT WAY:  
ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND SECULAR ENCHANTMENT IN ESTONIA**

By Jeffers Engelhardt  
Oxford University Press 2015  
ISBN 978-0-19-933213-7

Orthodoxy and Orthodox singing in Estonia are not widely known in the Western, Anglophone world. Jeffers Engelhardt, who has researched Estonian Orthodox singing since the early 2000s, has published several articles in the field, including a PhD dissertation, with a deep ethnomusicological but also theological understanding. His book *Singing the Right Way. Orthodox Christians and Secular Enchantment in Estonia*, published by Oxford University Press in 2015, is a valuable resource offering an insight into the fascinating history of Orthodoxy in Estonia and the diverse world of singing in the Estonian Orthodox Church.



The book takes the reader through the origins of Orthodoxy in Estonia and the main branches in the theology and history of Orthodox singing to the formation of national Estonian Orthodox identities and specialities of local singing. A complementary online companion containing Engelhardt's field recordings provides the reader with a valuable aural experience of the different styles and traditions of singing that are abundant in a relatively small country. The companion is essential to a full understanding of the book, but it limits the reading process slightly as it requires internet access. It is worth the effort, however, especially when it comes to the tracks recorded in remote areas of Setomaa and Kihnu: this is the kind of material that makes a musician's heart leap.

Engelhardt does excellent work in analysing the secular enchantment of Orthodoxy, effected by national ideologies and identities and political endeavours, and the reflexivity of identity and singing the right way at different historical and political moments.

There are a few minor indicators pointing to the fact that Engelhardt does not possess full professional insight into liturgics and Orthodox church music, which makes him slightly more dependent on his sources and leads to a few misinterpretations. This is, however, not relevant for the actual field of research, which is ethnomusicology: Engelhardt's mastery of

the complexities and multiple dimensions of his topic and sources proves his skill. His vivid language and humourous remarks bring to life the sounds, smells, tastes and landscapes Engelhardt describes, and gives voice to people whose stories he is telling.

The Estonian Orthodox Church is a small one with a rich history and a strong identity; an identity that has been in many ways wrought through the right way of singing. Singing in the right way in Estonia has taken many shapes and forms, some that are utterly unique to this particular national church. The story Engelhardt tells is not only a story of ethnomusicology, or Orthodoxy, or Orthodox singing, but a story of resilience and continuity of a living tradition and spirituality, and much more. Therefore, whatever your field, I recommend that you read this book.

Jooa Sotejeff-Wilson